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THE
CASINA,

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A

POEM

ILLA PLACET TELLUS IN QUARES PARVA BEATUM
ME FACIT.

MART

LONDON:
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MDCCCLXXXVI.

EK



GRATITUDE (or, perhaps, something nobler than Gratitude) prompted this momentary effusion. To those, then, who inspired, I now devote it, as warm from the brain, as it is from the heart. Trifles of this nature have but an extrinsic value: I therefore am the less concerned about this. The subject will save it; for all who read of, and know the Weybridge Society, will think less of the description, than of the happiness they there enjoyed.

From the CASINA,
August 24, 1786.

T H E
C A S I N A.

W H E R E the soft-flowing Wey, in obedience to
beauty,

In silence glides on, and seems pleas'd with its duty ;

Where the banks of its streams, overhung with young wil-
lows,

Are strangers to storms, and secure from rude billows ;

Fair

Fair Nature has form'd a small crescent, conceal'd
 From all that disturbs or the cot, or the field :
 A favourite spot, which fond Fate in vagary
 First gave to a shepherd, but destin'd for MARY.

On the trunk of an oak the sweet mansion is seated,
 By Nature begun, and by Fancy completed ;
 The close-clinging branches encircle its sides,
 And beneath it obsequious and slow the wave glides.
 All that judgment and taste, by pure nature refin'd,
 All that pleases the eye, and gives ease to the mind,
 All that hearts uncorrupted, and victors of fashion,
 Can taste without fear, and enjoy without passion,
 Are there in small compass,—a Nut-shell of bliss !
 Where the soul knows no pang, and the mind no distress.
 What time the mild ev'ning, in fleecy array,
 Begins to compensate the heats of the day,

From the sweet winding village appears the gay throng,
By pleasure inspir'd, and by joy led along.

Reveal, O ye Muses, the names of the fair,
Who to Mary's Casina are wont to repair,
Reveal all their virtues, their beauties, their merit,
And while you reveal, bid my lines flow with spirit.
But who shall start first, where they're all sure of winning,
A circle complete, without end or beginning?
Like a nosegay, where fragrance of ev'ry kind meets,
They shall mix, and the world will distinguish their sweets.

Then STUART, auspicious be thou to the strain:
Let me place thee in front, to lead on the fair train,
With those eyes, where sound judgment and fancy combine
To mingle their beams in effulgence divine.
In her air, in her mien, in her manner and gait,
Sans fashion, there's ease, and there's fashion sans state:

Her

Her soul is the emblem of truth unarray'd,
 And she speaks without fear what she knows should be said.
 Like the lightning she darts when occasion is fit;
 And her own sense alone can keep pace with her wit.
 Still her humour's humane, she is feeling tho' witty,
 And her heart is a soft emanation of pity.

Meek ASTON in word and in way is bewitching;
 Ev'ry virtue that softens the heart she is rich in.
 Without form a companion, a friend without shew,
 The fav'rite of Heav'n, and of mortals below:
 For an angel's less pure, and the greatest on earth
 Have been proud to acknowledge her beauty and worth.

The NYMPH OF THE TREE is the next in my song,
 The CASINA's fond queen, and the joy of the throng:
 When nature first made her, it was not with ease,
 For she mingled in one ev'ry gift that could please.

Her

Her fancy is lively, her wit is in season,

And both wit and fancy are rul'd by right reason.

Such a friend is a bliss, such a neighbour is heav'n,

But 'tis only to ASTON such neighbours are giv'n.

Th' enrapturing MAYOR comes forward in turn,

With the light of true genius her eyes ever burn.

Her judgment is such, that there's nothing escapes,

For she grasps at all knowledge in all its bright shapes.

But when her soft accents she pours on the ear,

That heart must be stone that refuses a tear ;

And when her wild pleasantry takes its gay flight,

Such laughter not Momus himself can excite.

The amiable BROOKES, the accomplish'd and good,

Is the next that repairs to the banks of the flood :

She aims not at wit, yet she's sensibly witty,

She's handsome with ease, and she's much more than
pretty.

B

There

There is softness of manner, and love in her look,
 And she's cherish'd by all who frequent the dear brook.

Dear ELIZA, the last, not the least in my song,
 With thee, lovely maid, let me crown the bright throng ;
 With thee, in whose bosom the virtues all dwell,
 With thee, in whose person the graces excel :
 To art she owes nothing, 'tis nature's her guide,
 As she is of nature the flow'r and the pride :
 Her eye speaks her mind, and her mind is as bright
 As the just rising sun, when he hurts not our sight.
 Her white is the lily, her bloom is the rose,
 But her temper, her candour, are sweeter than those :
 The offspring of Banquo, she glows with her fire,
 Tho' feminine softness conceals the great fire ;
 But such is the love her own virtues obtain,
 That ev'ry thing foreign t' ELIZA is vain.

And

And now on the Crescent, beside the calm stream,
 This fortunate groupe, with the sun's setting beam,
 When all Nature's at ease, and the hour of the eve
 Bids the plowman hie home, and his oxen relieve,
 Contented, delighted with each other's joy,
 In pastimes of fancy their moments employ.

Here MAYOR's soft voice o'er the waves of the Wey
 Bids the waters of Dee flow more sweetly than they ;
 There ASTON and HETTY to MARY's side cling,
 To hear from her lips, the sweet bard of the spring :
 Here STUART's bright fancy shoots o'er the rich scene,
 In nature's pursuit from the skies to the green ;
 While ELIZA the fair bids a new nature rise,
 And enlivens the work with the beams from her eyes.
 Sometimes in light frolic they trip off the day,
 Or crowd the small bark on the bosom of Wey.

Adorn the dear stream with the horn, or the song,
Or the well-season'd jest, they skim smoothly along.

The punctual skiff knows 'tis beauty that guides,
And the waters obey the fair arm that divides.

No prospect is lost while they run down the shore,
From Holland's green glade to the lawns of Portmore :

These lawns where a beauty now brightens the seat
That once was an indolent monarch's retreat ;
Where, pleas'd with the people, and loath to depart,
The Thames circles long and meanders with art.

But when the grey Morning invites to the hill,
When health's in the gale, and the breezes are chill,
In groups they all start, and direct their proud steeds
Up hills and down vallies, o'er heaths and thro' meads.
In rural array, they despise every form,
Regardless alike of the sun or the storm.

On

On the camp of great Cæsar, in health's rosy
 Their eyes make more slaves than he did with his arms,
 From the bright Peak of Anna the world is in view ;
 But they rise o'er its passions and boundaries too :
 On Pan's* shaggy hill, and thro' Hamilton's groves,
 Where the genius of nature exultingly roves,
 They wander in rapture, in pleasure they stray,
 But they find nothing there half so happy as they ;
 Thro' the splendors of Oatland they cheerfully roam,
 But sweetest felicity waits them at home.
 And see the dear circle surrounding the board,
 Crown'd with all that the health-giving seasons afford !

* It is not improbable that this was the original name given by the
 Romans to that now vulgarly called *Pain's Hill*.

See

on their cheeks ; see the smiles on their faces ;

And nature displaying her ease and her graces !

Observe the keen wit unimbitter'd by gall,

And attend how fond union makes friends of them all.

Ye times of sweet innocence, ages of gold,

When pleasure was virtue, and virtue was bold :

When fear had no pow'r to restrain a good deed,

When a friend, in his absence, was ne'er made to bleed ;

When emulous angels beheld from above

Fidelity join'd with the purest of love :

Once more, happy times, ye return to our view,

To bless the retreat of this fortunate few.

And is there a pleasure below that can vie

With the rivetted look, the reciprocal sigh,

The cordial request, the cementing expression,

The pleasing allusion, the timely digression,

The

The smile, and the jest where the friend never smil'd

The blending of souls, and the mingling of hearts ?

Such bliss is the lot of the friends of the Wey :

Content is their fun, and it shines all the day :

No clouds of dark passions envelope the scene,

No fumes of intemp'rance, nor vapours of spleen.

But select are the few, and the circle is small,

Who thus follow Nature, and hear her chaste call.

If fortune should send to the care-killing troop,

A SMITH, whose just sallies give life to the group ;

Or a TOWNLEY, whom Heav'n kindly lends us, to view,

As a sketch of its beauty and purity too :

If chance should convey the three Graces with HUME,

Or Innocence' self should appear in their room ;

Then their pleasure's more vivid, more sprightly their play,

And they crown with more ardour the joys of the day.

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ine, O ye scenes, as I journey through life,

Thus to burst from the world, from its cares, from its
strife;

With content, and a sociable cluster alone,

To catch but a day, and to make it my own!

Reluctant

Cherry List

THE END.

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